

MINING AND HUNTING

IN THE FAR WEST.

Graff

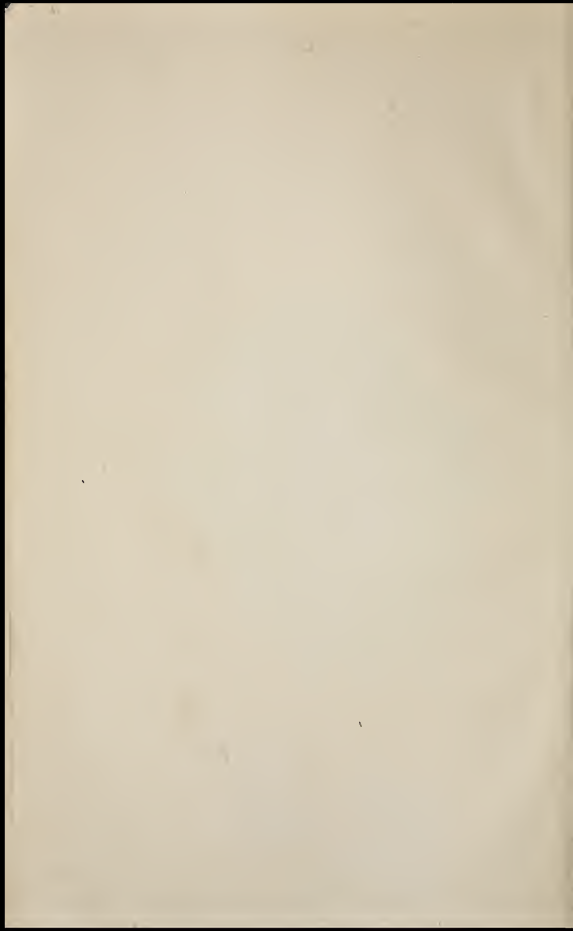
The Newberry Library

The Everett D. Graff Collection
of Western Americana

2162

see Index File

Noyes B. Wooster.







1852-1870.

Mining and Hunting

IN THE FAR WEST.

—BY—

F. A. ISBELL,

STEVENSON, CONN.



1852-1870.



Mining and Hunting

IN THE FAR WEST.

—BY—

F. A. ISBELL,

STEVENSON, CONN.

J. S. STEWART, PRINTER AND BOOKBINDER, MIDDLETOWN, CONN.

DEDICATION.

I DEDICATE this narrative to my nephews, George and Willard Isbell, Willis Isbell, better known as "Parson Isbell," Herbert Isbell, Eddie Dayton, and Fred Roberts, and a few intimate friends.

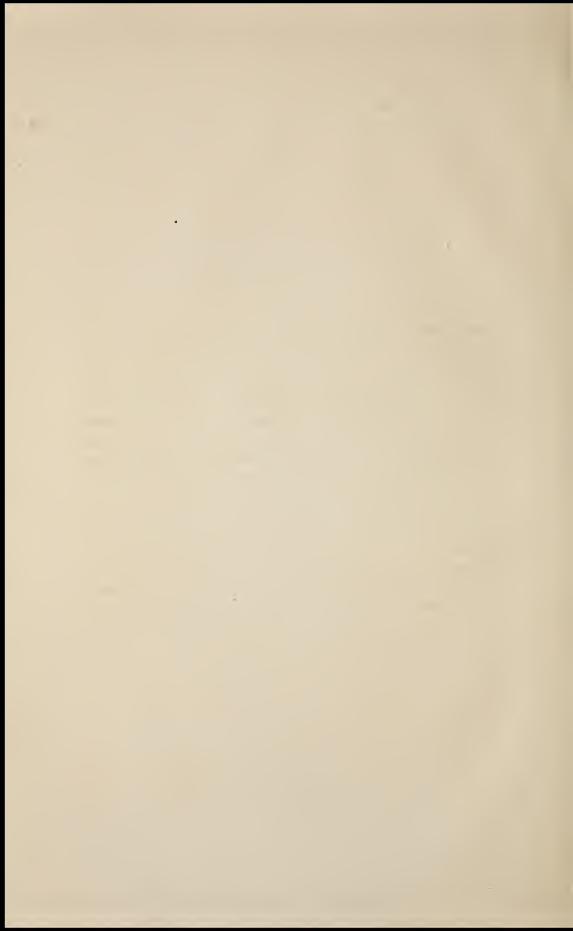


PREFACE.

I HAVE been so often requested to write up this narrative, I have yielded. But I will say that in all the statements I have made in this book, I have not exaggerated in the least. I do not boast of having killed or shot at an Indian, although I have been on several hunts for them, and no Indian ever shot at me; but only two of the sixteen with me escaped being shot at, and one was killed. In all the hairbreadth escapes during my eighteen years in the wilds of California and Idaho, I never, thanks to a kind Providence, received scarcely a scratch.

I hope that the reader will feel as my nephew Fred did when begging me to tell another "bear story," when I said "I have told them all;" he said, "Tell them over again."

I often told my father, when a boy, that when I got to be a man I would go for bigger game than Woodbury furnished. After reading Livingstone's travels, I resolved to go to Africa, although not twenty-one years of age.



MINING AND HUNTING

IN THE FAR WEST.

IN the spring of 1852, on the 2d day of March, I sailed for California by the way of Cape Horn. I could not get a ticket by the way of the Isthmus, as they had all been taken for two months ahead. Some thought we could make the journey in ninety or a hundred days. We were one hundred and sixty-two days out from the time we left New York until we landed in San Francisco. We sailed in a full-rigged clipper ship. Her name was "The Grecian." She was fitted up to carry passengers, and everything was new. One could imagine, on leaving New York at that season of the year, that there would be some rough weather to encounter. We set sail about 4 P. M. with three hundred passengers. I went to my state-room at 9 P. M. It was quite rough—one could not stand without support—very soon I heard some one say, "I am sick!"

I was not feeling well myself, but I kept quiet until midnight. I then asked my room-mate how he was. "Oh," he said, "I am so sick." I laughed. He said, "Don't laugh at me." And so, I could hear them far and near. My room-mate was all right in a few days, but my sickness lasted two weeks; and then the small-pox broke out. The man that brought it aboard did not know he had been exposed; he died about twenty feet from our state-room in a hammock. Some would say, "Well, there will not be many of us left by the time we land at Frisco." But he was the only one that died. About sixty had the varioloid; but not one in our state-room had it.

Our first stop was at Rio Janeiro. We staid one week and took the city in. There is a large fort on the hill to protect the harbor. I saw the long flight of stone steps leading up to it, so I thought I would investigate. I was quite near the top, when

a man appeared with a musket and bayonet, and after me he came. I went down those stone steps two and three at a jump. I was making the best time I could. After that race, it put me in mind of a foot race I once saw between a white man and a darky. The white man thought he could run a good race for one hundred yards; so he bet five dollars with the darky. He got the best in the start, but when about half way the darky began to gain on him, and soon passed him, he rolled his eye back at him and said, "Now, run or you will lose your money." The white man stopped there; he never run another step. After the race the darky said, "You can't run; I have run before; I won a thousand dollars for my old master in South Carolina." I did not stop going down those stone steps until I was out of reach of his bayonet.

The next place I visited was the Botanical Gardens. It was a beautiful place—all the tropical fruits growing in abundance. There was a stream of water running all around the grounds, which were paved with small stones. At the entrance the stately palms shaded the driveway. The Emperor's garden no one was allowed to enter—a high iron fence surrounded it. It was a grand sight to even look between the iron rails; and as we passed out of the harbor, we all took our last view of the rock called the Sugar Loaf, with the vessel heading for Cape Horn. We had not been out but three days when a young man was taken suddenly sick and died. The doctors thought it was yellow fever; they sewed him up in canvas and dropped him overboard.

The rest of the journey was made, without any great event, to the Cape. There we stayed two weeks, awaiting favorable winds. After we got around, what a gale there was for twenty-four hours, blowing us on the land. The captain said, "If this lasts much longer on to the rocks we'll go, and not a chance for one of us to escape." Here we could see all kinds of sea birds, from "Mother Carey's chickens" to the albatross. My sport was to catch Cape pigeons with hook baited with salt pork; their size was like our doves here.

The next port was Chili, about two hundred miles from Valparaiso. There we staid two weeks. I went hunting once; could find nothing but turkey-buzzards and fish ducks and seals. Again we are sailing for the Golden Gate, arriving there August 12th, 1852. I did not stay long in the city—took the boat for Stockton; left our baggage. Four of us started with our blankets on our back for Mokelumne hill, a mining camp sixty miles from Stockton. I had a pair of heavy boots. I wore them in place of thin ones. I had not traveled more than five miles before the skin was off from my toes. I pulled off my boots, but the sand was so hot I could not walk in it. I put on my socks, carried my boots on my back, and on and on we went. We could get enough to eat for a dollar a meal, and lie under a tree at night with my feet out to get cool; in the morning they were so sore I could hardly step, but after I had walked for a mile or more, I could go all day; but I often thought of what my father told me when I was leaving home, "I am afraid, my boy, you will see the time that would like to go into your mother's pantry."

We arrived in sight of the mining camp the third day jnst at night, but one of the party was taken sick and he could go no farther, so we passed another night under the trees, and as soon as daylight appeared we all walked into camp, and there we rested for nearly two weeks. Where we stopped the man kept a boarding house and store. I had not been there but two days when he said to me, "If you will bring water for the cook, I will give you your board." I thought that was good of him, for everything was dear, and I could bring all the water the cook wanted in an hour. Finally, he wanted me to stay with him. He said he would do well by me. But I had been prospecting a little, and thought I had a good claim, so when the rain came, I went to mining; but my claim did not last long. The pay dirt ran out, the rain fell in torrents, provisions went up, flour was one dollar a pound, and could not get much, for it was scarce.

I went down to Sacramento, and the whole city was flooded. Goods of every kind were drawn through the city in boats with

horses, through mud, and under water a foot deep. I left there and went to Frisco; from there I crossed the bay to Oakland, and went up the San Jose valley. There were thousands of cattle and horses, and I saw that the people were Americans, and that they had put up tents through the valley for some purpose. On investigation I learned that they were going to plow and raise grain. The Spaniards claimed the land, but they were not strong enough to drive them off. I soon found a job at plowing for grain and potatoes. They paid ten cents a pound for seed potatoes, but I never saw so many potatoes in all my life as I saw in that field.

There was a man working with me that was a good shot on the wing. I proposed to him to hunt for the market. He said we could make it pay, but we ought to have another man to take the game to market, while we hunted, and let him hunt what he could. We began to purchase our outfit, consisting of one tent, guns, three boats, five hundred and seventy-five pounds of ammunition, one mule, harness and cart. We hunted ducks and geese; there were thousands of them; we could load the cart in two days. I hunted the geese with a mule mostly, sometimes with an ox. I tied a string on the mule's neck and walked by the side of him with my head down. I could look under his neck and the geese would not notice me. I would work the mule around. Sometimes I would go almost around before I could get a shot; then I would drop the string and step behind the mule to shoot. My gun weighed fourteen pounds, No. 7 bore. I loaded it heavy; did not shoot at a single goose often. I have killed twelve at a shot, with both barrels; many a time have killed from four to six. One day I killed forty-four; at another time I killed twenty-five ducks at a shot with both barrels. I should judge there were a thousand in the flock. I followed them. I got another shot and killed eleven more. They were all the same kind called widgeons.

One thing I forgot to mention about hunting geese. I saw at one time on the bay that there were flats covered with salt grass, and the geese would go there in large flocks. So, one day I took my boat, went down a slough, the tide was going

out, and I could keep out of sight; when I got where the geese were, about forty feet from me, I had to be careful not to make a noise, for I knew if I did, away they would go. I got out of the boat all right with my gun. I saw the mud was soft, but I thought the nearer the bank I got the harder the ground would be; but it grew softer, and I began to go down so that the mud was running in at the top of my hip-boots, and the only chance of getting out was to use my gun. So, I laid my gun in the mud and dug with one hand until I got out; but it was a close call for me, and I was the worse-looking man that any one ever saw, covered with black mud. My gun, no one could ever guess what it was; and, another thing, I knew that the tide would rise and drown me, so it was a struggle for life and geese, too. I am sure that if I could have reached the bank, I could have killed fifty of them. Of course, they became a drug on the market, for so many were hunting them.

From there we went to the Foot Hills to hunt deer and quail. We could get four dollars a dozen for quail and twelve cents a pound for deer meat. I could kill from two to four dozen a day. One day I killed fifty-two. I carried buckshot in my pocket and often killed one or two deer when I was hunting quail. We killed a sight of game there; but one night one of my partners had a hemorrhage. I said to him that means you cannot expose your health any longer. You must give up your hunting and sleeping on the ground. He said he was aware of it, and wished me to buy his interest and he would go to the States.

I did so. I went with him to the boat. He felt bad, and said, "I have a wife in Philadelphia, and when I left her I gave her five thousand dollars, but I don't know as I shall ever see her again, for it takes twenty-five days to make the journey." He promised me he would write me when he reached New York, but I never heard from him. About two years after, by accident, I met a man that was on the same steamer. He told me that he died before he reached the Isthmus. That stopped us from hunting for a while, and as the warm weather was near, we got some cloth and made a tent in the mountains, so that

when we wanted to go there, we would have a shelter. One man says, "Why don't you claim the ground; you can sell it to some one." The hills were covered with wild oats. We put down four stakes and the claim was ours. In the spring time we could see two and three grizzlies feeding on the hills in the early morning. They were not always in good places to shoot; but this morning I saw one on the mountain side, so I thought I would try to get a shot. I looked out for the wind, so he would not scent me. I crawled on top of the ridge; his head was down the hill. I drew a bead on him, and when the gun cracked down he went end over end until he found a level spot. Then he began to look around to see where that noise came from. I was lying in the oats trying to load my rifle (we did not have the Winchester in those days). I put in a charge of powder, did not stop to patch the ball, and put a cap on. He was still looking around; but I thought he would not live long, for I knew the ball went through him. I saw a large rock at the foot of the hill, and I thought if I could get behind it, I could get another shot at him. So I crawled along until I was quite near; then I walked to the rock and found there was a large crack in it, and I could hide and he could not get to me. I waited for a moment. I could not hear him. I went around the lower side of the rock. He got up and was walking off. He did not see me. I gave him another shot. This time he was broadside to me. I took good aim just back of his fore leg, but when the rifle cracked he never even looked around; and I thought, is it possible I did not hit him? He walked and I ran into the rock and loaded the rifle. I then stepped out. Very soon I heard the stones rattle in a ravine below the rock, and as I looked down he saw me. I gave him another shot. He never even made a noise, but walked out of the ravine on to the bank, laid down and died. Very soon I went to see where I had hit him. The first shot went about three inches from his tail, and the bullet came out on the side of his neck. The other two bullets went through his body back of the fore leg and through the lungs.

When I opened him I found the first bullet went so close to his heart that it blackened one side of it. I got some one to help me pack the hide and hindquarters into camp. I took the meat to Frisco, but I did not get much for it. He was too fat to eat, they said. On my way back to camp I met a man who I knew was a hunter. He asked me if I knew who it was killed the grizzly on the mountain. I said I did. He looked at me for a moment, then said, "Young man, you want to be careful how you hunt such game as that." I told him I knew that, but hunting was my strong suit, and the larger the game the better I liked it. My partners did not like that kind of hunting. I liked hunting deer the best of all game, but while hunting deer one is apt to run upon an old grizzly at any time. I was always on the watch when near thick brush, for that is where the grizzlies lie during the day, and if a man comes along he has no chance to escape. Very seldom they kill a man unless they are cornered or wounded or has young ones to protect. The only way a man can escape when in their grasp is to lay still and let him bite. I saw four men who escaped with their lives. One lost his right arm, another was bitten in the face under the eye; the bone was mashed all up and he was disfigured for life. The third man was hunting deer. It was just at night. He heard the bush crackle, and put his rifle to his shoulder, thinking it was deer, but, to his surprise, it was a grizzly. He came for him. He run for the ravine, but the bear overtook him just before he reached it. The water had cut a channel about four feet deep and nearly as wide. He had only a few steps to go and he would have jumped into it, but the bear struck him in his side, taking a piece of flesh that would weigh nearly a pound. He fell into the leaves and brush, and the bear jumped across the ravine and never even looked at him. He had a friend with him. I saw them coming and went out to see what had happened. One man had his leg tied to the horn of the saddle. I asked him if he was hurt. He thought he was hurt some, for an old grizzly had got hold of him and bit him pretty bad. There was plenty of game at this place—bear, deer, elk and quail.

I hunted most of the time and my partner took the game to market. When I did not have enough he would go out with me for a day or two. One day we were riding our mules, looking for deer, but we had not seen one for a long time and it was nearly night. We saw an old grizzly under an oak tree eating acorns. We rode along on the other side of the ridge until about opposite. We got off our mules. I went over the ridge, but it was so dark I could not see the sight on my rifle; but I thought I could hit him, but was not sure of killing him. My partner said all right, he would hold the mules, but as soon as I had shot, to run for my mule. I put my rifle to my shoulder. He turned his side toward me. I pulled the trigger, and such a noise he made. He went one way, and I another for my mule. I sat for a few seconds. I did not hear a sound, so we walked to where I shot at him under the tree, but he was not there. We went to the tree and lighted matches. We found plenty of blood and the ground torn up. I said I had given him a bad shot, and I think we had better take the saddles off the mules and stay here to-night, for I think we will find him in the morning, and it is not very safe to be looking for him in the dark. The next morning we soon found him lying dead near a burned log, not far from us. We took his hide to camp and sold it to a Digger Indian for fifteen dollars.

The next call I had was a close one for me. One morning I started alone with my mule to kill deer. There were plenty of them. I could sometimes get three and four shots at them in a morning's hunt. A Dutchman that hunted was out one day. He saw a large buck, but did not get a shot at him. He said to me if you kill him he will bring you twenty-five dollars. That morning I was riding along on top of a ridge. I looked at my left. There were three deer laying off under a tree—an old buck and two does. They saw me as soon as I saw them. I knew that I had no time to get off my mule. He was breathing heavy and it was hard to take aim. Just as I shot, the buck jumped up. I broke his fore leg, and away they all went into a big canyon. I sat down and watched, for I was sure they would cross to the other side. I did not wait long

before I saw the buck ; the others had left him. I thought he would lay down soon. I saw ahead of him there had been a small landslide. He went in there and was out of sight, but I could see him if he came out. I thought he had laid down. I started to cross the canyon, leaving my mule where I had shot at him. Toward the bottom of the canyon I saw plenty of bear tracks ; so I kept away from the thick brush, looked with one eye for bears and one for the deer. I looked the place all over, but I did not see the deer, and concluded he had gone from there. All at once I saw the deer and shot as quickly as I could. He made two jumps and was down the hill out of sight. I ran to where he was when I shot at him. I listened to see if I could hear or see him. As I stood there I saw the tops of some bushes move ; of course I thought it was the deer. I started on. I soon saw an old grizzly's head. I raised my rifle. All I could see was his head. I knew I must hit him near the end of his nose as he was looking up the hill, and should the ball glance off and not hit him, he would come for me. There was a small oak at my left I knew I could climb. He did not wait for me to shoot, but came for me. I ran for the tree, climbed it the best I could, stationed myself against the body of it, for I had to have both hands to shoot with. He came within ten feet of me, and I put a ball in his head just above his eye. I assure you he was dead before I left the little oak, the only refuge I had.

I went on looking for the deer, and found he had fallen, for there was blood on the bushes. I thought the bear smelt the blood of the deer and was following him, but when he saw me he came for my blood instead. I took his hide off with much pleasure, had it tanned with others with the claws on, and brought it home to my father, who was a great hunter for his own section.

A party of eight went to the foot hills back of old San Jose Mission. Some thought there was gold there, but we had never heard of any being found there. We had three rifles and one shot gun. The first day we left camp we made a fire and stopped for dinner. While I was getting the dinner a little Dutchman in the party said he would take his rifle and see if he

could find a deer. He had not been gone long when I looked up and saw him beckoning to us to come over. We started with our rifles and shot-gun. When we got where he was, he said there was an old grizzly with three cubs in the ravine. We crept into the wild oats and looked at her. She was a big one, and I knew if she saw us there would be trouble. I said to the Dutchman, "You stay here and I will go around on the other side of the ridge, where I can get a shot at her." I said I would look out for myself and you fellows must do the same. The Dutchman said no, we had better keep together. There were plenty of oak trees; some of them were quite large.

While we were planning the best way to get a shot at the bear and not have her see us, all at once she raised up on her hind feet, and we knew something disturbed her. We had two dogs that belonged to the party, but they were not worth the powder it would take to kill them. We did not know that they had left the camp; but they tried to follow us, and they went into the ravine where the bear was, and as soon as they saw her they ran towards her, and she come for them at a lively gait. They did not stop long to bark at her, but started for us. We saw that she was coming for the dogs and us, too. I shot at her, but I don't think I hurt her. The man that had the shot-gun went up the nearest tree. He left the gun against the body of the tree. I dropped my rifle and up the same tree I went. He said "Fred, for God's sake, bring up that gun." I got on the lower limb, and by laying across it I managed to reach the gun and raise it up, and had got back on the limb as the dogs flew past the tree. Bruin looked up and saw me. She stopped. I gave her one barrel of buckshot and she fell. I knew there wasn't powder enough behind the ball to kill her, but when she raised up her head I pulled the trigger to the other barrel, but it missed fire. I knew the Dutchman was near by, but I could not see him. He had a double-barrel rifle and I expected to hear him shoot every second. The bear soon came to her senses and away she went, cubs and all. I got down and looked for the Dutchman and the rest of the party. He stepped from behind a big oak tree. I asked him why he did not shoot one barrel at her. He

said she would catch him, for the tree was so big he couldn't climb it. The rest of the party, without guns, that came to see the bear and cubs, never stopped running until they got to camp. We soon joined them. After dinner we saddled the horses and started on our journey. We never found any gold. We saw two more grizzlies, but did not kill them. We had all the deer meat we wanted to eat and quail without number.

After a few days prospecting we returned to our old camp; from there we went into the valley. While there two men came to us and said they heard we had taken up some land in the little valley in the mountain. I said yes. They asked me what we would sell our right for. I said I would ask my partner. He said sell it, for all we had done was to drive four stakes. I told them we would sell for five hundred dollars. They offered me four hundred and fifty dollars. I said it was theirs.

We heard there was a new mining camp started in the southern part of California called Kern River, so we decided to take that in. While we were making arrangements to go another man wanted to go with us. He had a mule and a horse. It was about three hundred miles there. We had to cross from the San Jose Valley to the San Joaquin Valley; that was about seventy miles. In the valley we found plenty of sage brush and sand. One day we overtook a man traveling all alone with a mustang and wagon. I thought he was a hunter by his rig. I talked with him. He said if there was a chance to hunt for the mines he should do so, for he could make more at that than mining. As we traveled along we began to meet them coming back from the mines. They said it was no good; it was a humbug; there was only one little ravine that paid. We stopped and talked the matter over, and decided to go back with the rest. On our way back, a man stopped at our camp one night; he had been to the mine and said it was no good; but he said if he was a good hunter he would go there and hunt for the Indian Reservation, for anyone could get twelve cents a pound for all the deer, antelope, elk, and mountain sheep, but no bear meat, for the Indians would not eat that. My partner did not think much of it, but the man that was alone did, and wanted

me to go back with him. He said if I would go, he would go back with us to Hill's Ferry on the San Joaquin river—that was where he made his home. I found he had hunted most of the time in California and was a splendid shot. I asked him if he had ever killed a bear, and he said no, he had not, but he had shot at two or three, but had never put a knife into one yet; but they had got hold of him. He put his hand to his neck and said, "You see those scars; that is where one tried to eat me; she shook me like a dog would a woodchuck; I thought my head was off; then she bit me through both legs." He said, "I will tell you how it happened." So I will write it as near as I can how he got away:

A small party were in camp, and he had been hunting and killed a deer. Coming back, he saw bear tracks, so when he reached camp he told them about it. One of the party wanted to go with him and see the tracks and he would help him pack the deer in. He had not been in California but a short time. They started out. The hunter did not take his gun, but had his knife, for he thought the gun would be in the way, as they had to pack the deer on their back. They went a nearer way, and when he got to where he thought he ought to cross the bear tracks, as he was looking for them, he ran onto her in the bushes with her cubs. She jumped at him. He started to run, but she struck him in the side and he went down. She jumped on him and caught him in the neck. He tried to use his knife, but he could not get it. The other man was lying on the ground not far away, but he could not help him. After she thought she had killed him, she went for the other man. He jumped and run, for there were no trees to climb around there.

The hunter got up the best he could and looked around. He saw the cubs lying there, and he knew he had got to get away from there if possible. He was bleeding badly, but he went on. Very soon he heard the other man scream, and they heard him at the camp. They came to him first. He told them he thought he could get to camp, and they had better go to the other man, for he might be worse off. The bear had left him;

she had either struck or bitten him, he could not tell which. He was not hurt very much, but the hunter did not leave his bed for six weeks.

Well, the next hunt was a long one. The hunter that was bitten so badly wanted me to go down to the Reservation and see if we could get the job to hunt. So we went down to Stockton and bought our supplies. He had two horses and I had two mules. We left Stockton in May, 1855, and traveled on the west side of the San Joaquin river to a place called Firebaugh Ferry. From there we went to Tulare lake, followed that upon the west side, from thence to Buena Vista lake and Kern lake. Found plenty of game all the way—antelope, elk, and wild horses. We were within eighteen miles of the Reservation. We went up into the foot hills, and I never saw so much game of all kinds as there were there, and never expect to again. Every morning I could find deer, antelope, mountain sheep and bear. We went to the Reservation to see if we could furnish them with game, but found there was a party that got in ahead of us. We camped in this place two weeks, and again came in contact with the bears. We killed four—two old and two young ones. The first was a bad one. She had three cubs, and was right on the fight. I went out this day to kill a mountain sheep. I was riding my mule along up to the bluff, for the sheep used to lie on the rocks and on the bluffs. I stopped and was looking around to see what I could find. I looked at the foot of the mountain and I saw a bear with three cubs. She had not seen me, so I tried to get a shot at her. I looked the ground over, and saw there was a ravine that the water had cut out near the foot of the mountain. I could follow that and she could not see me. The bank was about thirty feet high and as steep as the roof of a house. I thought I would go below her, and if I did not kill her she would run toward the mountain; so I went down until I thought I was below her. I crawled up the bank to see where she was. I found I was not low enough down. I went back and went on further down. When I climbed the bank the next time to shoot she had either smelled or heard me. I saw her running toward the mountain and I shot

at her and then she came for me. I stopped long enough to put a charge of powder in my rifle, and then I started down the ravine. I got a bullet down. I thought this was no place for me, so I went on the opposite side where it was steep and the bear could not rush on me. I put a cap on; she saw me. There was not a rock or bush I could get to, and I had to stand my ground; but she stopped on the other side and looked at me, then turned and went back to her cubs. I did not shoot again. A few days later my partner was with me after sheep, and as we were standing on a bluff, he saw the bear and her cubs, and he said she was coming right this way. I said let her come; we will fix her this time. He said we had better let her go, and I said no, she run me, and now it is my turn to see who will run this time. The bear did not know where we were, for she came about half way, stopped and dug something. Then she came along on a little ridge from us, and when she was opposite us I said now is the time for you to kill a bear. He said again we had better let her go. No, I said, if you don't shoot I will. He put the rifle to his shoulder, and I saw he had got the buck fever and was a little shaky, so I said hold on; but when he raised his rifle again I saw he was all right. When the rifle cracked down she went and did not make any fuss. He loaded again. She was trying to get up, and I shot at her, and over she rolled down the hill. I reloaded. I asked him if he saw her. He said no, but I hear her among the rocks. I thought she was hit in the back and couldn't get up, so I walked up one side of the ravine. I could see her head through the bushes. I said "Stand still; she cannot get up." "Let me kill her," he said. He shot at her, but the bullet passed over her. I then drew my rifle up. He said, "Give me one more shot, for I have been all bit up by them and never have had the satisfaction of saying I have killed one; let me have one more shot, and if I don't kill her, I will pay for all we can eat and drink when we get where it is." So he killed her. We killed two of the cubs; they were the size of an old coon, and how they could run. We took the old one's hide. He wanted to know if he could have it. "Yes," I said, "I have two and that is all I want."

The next day or so I thought I would try the sheep again. I wanted to get an old ram's head and horns to bring home with me, so I started up a steep rocky cliff. I should judge it was a mile ; as I looked from the bottom towards the top, I thought I could climb it. The sheep would lie among the rocks all day. I had got about half way up the cliff and saw five, but they were small ones, so I did not shoot at them. I went on, thinking I should find more. At last I came to a spot about forty feet long and found a ridge on the other side of it ; it was all of two hundred feet to the bottom, so I thought I should have to turn back ; I did so. I had not gone far before I found I could not find the way I came. I laid my gun on one rock while I climbed another, but when I tried to get down I could not find a place to put my feet. I saw then my only chance was to go ahead. I went back to the place, but did not dare to walk up it. I got on the rock the same as a boy on horseback, and began to hitch up it ; but I could not make much headway it was so steep ; but I managed to get to the top and get back to camp, but it learned me never to climb where I could not find my way back. It seems my partner had been watching me from the camp ; he said he expected to see me fall every moment.

We killed one more grizzly ; he was not on the war path and wasn't very large. After shooting four times we got him down to stay. After our hunt in the foot hills we went down in the valley. We camped on the bank of Kern lake. One morning, just as breakfast was ready, I glanced up and saw seven elk coming down to the lake for water. We went out and shot three of them, and just at night one came back and I shot it. We dried the best of the meat and saved the hides.

Then we went to a place called Tahatchapy Valley. There we found plenty of deer and bear and grouse. From there we went to a place called Walker's Pass, and shot another bear. We hit him, but it was just at night, and he went into the bush, and we let him alone. From here we went to the Kern river mines, but found most of the miners had returned ; they did not find gold as plenty as it is in the Klondike mines. We returned to Kern lake with the hides ; an Indian tanned them. He was sev-

eral days doing it. We shot deer and antelope to pay him, as he could not shoot much with his bow and arrow. We have often seen wild mustangs come to the lake to drink in the morning; so the morning that we started back, my partner took his rifle and said he was going to try and "crease" one of them—that is to shoot them through the neck. It will tumble them over, then you have a chance to catch one. I watched him crawl upon them. He shot at one; I saw him stagger, but he did not fall. He shot at another and he fell. He got to him and fastened a cord to his neck and feet. He examined him to see where he had hit him, and found he had broken his neck, and there was no use for cord. He came to camp and we started back on our trip. I looked at the other mustang; I was near enough to see he was shot through the neck. I drove him along all day, and at night he was glad to stop. We kept him agoing for three days, and finally caught him, but he was too poor for anything. When we arrived at Hill's Ferry I left the mustang with him at his home. There we parted. He bid me good bye and said he had been well paid for his trip, and that he had killed a grizzly bear. I went from there back to San Jose Valley, the place where I commenced to hunt, and found several letters awaiting me; among them was one from my brother. They came while we were on our journey. We were gone from May 10th to October 1st, 1855. Many of them thought we had been killed, as we stayed so long away. I rested for a fortnight, and then went to the mines in El Dorado county, where my brother, P. J. Isbell, was mining, and worked there until next April 5th, 1856, when I started for my native place, Woodbury, Conn.

I was twenty-five days coming from San Francisco to New York by way of the Isthmus of Panama. Here we could not land because of a riot. The steamer from New York had been robbed and some Americans killed. The United States mail was scattered about the streets. I could walk through the streets on letters that had been opened and robbed. If any other nation had this outrage committed upon their mail, they would have sunk the place. We were not permitted to land

until quiet was restored. We had a beautiful passage, not one rough day. When I arrived in New York I found that I had to make some changes in my apparel, but that did not occupy much time. I then boarded the train for Seymour, Conn., then the stage to Woodbury.

My folks were expecting me. Father saw the stage coming. He stopped long enough to shake hands, and then went to the top of the stage for the bear skin. He had to undo it, he was so anxious to see it. While at home, the Rev. William Bacon of New Haven came to visit us and to hear about my hunting in California. He liked to hunt with father, and he said to him, "How would you like to hunt such big game as that?" Father said he would like to try it if he was only younger. I stayed at home until November, then I went back to California by the way of the Isthmus. I went into the mines again. I worked there winters as long as the water lasted. I went to a small town called Johntown. I found a man there by the name of Sherman Castle, who once worked for my brother, Henry Isbell, in Woodbury. We worked in the mines together most of the time up to 1862. One winter I went to Todd's Valley prospecting, and found a very good claim. One day two of us panned out one hundred and sixty-seven dollars. We found one piece of pure gold worth one hundred and forty-six dollars; that was our largest find in one day while in the mines. It was a small piece of ground and we worked it out that winter. I went back to Johntown. I asked Castle if he didn't want to go deer hunting; he said "Yes, where shall we go?" I said, "To the coast range of mountains." We left Johntown with a span of mules and wagon and my faithful dog "Towser."

We went to Auburn, from there to Marysville, and then to Colusa on the Sacramento river, the last settlement where we could get provisions. One day's traveling brought us to the foot hills in the Sacramento Valley. There was an old road where men had cut trees and brush. We followed it up to the summit of the mountain. Some places it was so steep the mules could not go more than ten feet at a time; but when we got there we

found a beautiful place—drifts of snow but a few yards off, and where we camped plenty of green grass for our mules.

We stayed a month. Deer were plentiful. We often have seen from ten to fifteen in a day. There were not many bears on the range; I only saw three. I shot at one of them, but he got away. We killed while there from twenty-five to thirty deer. We dried the meat and saved the hides. We went every summer for four years after the water dried up in the mines. While hunting one day we came across a skeleton of a man. On examination of the skull we decided it belonged to a white man. We found fine black hair and finger-nails. No one could tell how he met his fate, but we thought he must have been killed by the Indians.

The last time we went there, we traveled with the wagon as far as we could, then saddled the mules and traveled twenty miles further north, and there found plenty of deer. I took my dog along that I hunted quail with in the mines. He was not a full-blooded bird dog, but he was the best dog for all kinds of game that I ever had and the most faithful to his master—he would never follow anyone but myself. Even Castle could not get him to go hunting with him. I learned him to hunt deer; he would keep by my side, and when he scented one, he would look up at me, and all I had to do was to motion my hand to him and he would stop; but when I shot and said "Go," he would bound and run for a mile or more. I would let him go when I had shot a deer and he would stop him. In this place we found the most deer. I shot six in one day, in the morning and evening. I stood under a pine tree and shot four with a muzzle loader. They did not know what a gun was. If they did not scent you, they would jump when the gun was discharged, and look around to see the cause. We stayed three months this time, and it was the last hunting we did in California. We went back to the mines, and got everything ready to commence operations in the winter.

In the spring of 1862 gold had been discovered in Idaho, and sixteen of us started for the new gold fields. Each of us had two horses, one to carry provisions and blankets, and the other

to ride. All of us were well armed, for we had to go through an Indian country. I brought my dog, and the only one in the party. We went over the Sierra Nevada mountains down to Carson Valley. Here we found sage brush and sand, and a hard country to travel in. We had one desert of forty miles to cross; not a drop of water and the sand covered our shoes. By this time the dog's feet were getting sore. I carried a canteen of water for him. I soon found he could not travel any further. I put some buckskin on his feet. He traveled fairly for a short distance, but it hurt his feet, so I cut it off and carried him on my horse forward of me. He rode until he got tired, for there was no place to rest his feet; he would get off and go as far as he could, then come and stand on his hind feet to have me take him on again, and in that way I carried him through.

When we arrived at the gold region and got to prospecting, the dog had a chance to get rested, and proved very watchful. We built a brush shed for us to sleep under; nothing could come around in the night. One night the wolves came around; he went after them; they turned on him; he came for our brush shed and did not stop to go around, for the wolves were so close he gave a jump on to it; he came through onto a man's head as he lay asleep; he did not blame the dog when he found out the cause of the trouble, for he knew he was on guard all night for us.

There was a man in the party by the name of Jordan. He was the first man to find the color of gold, so the creek was named after him, and goes by that name yet—Jordan Creek, which empties into the Owhyhee river. Here we prospected and staked off all the ground we could hold. Our party divided into twos and threes. Clinton Castle and myself started to build a log cabin. We hadn't a piece of board or a pane of glass for a window. We cut two port holes about one foot long and four inches wide, then put up our bunk and filled it with pine boughs to sleep on. After we got it all completed it was about the first of October and we had to look out for our winter's supplies. I said, "It looks as if the snow fell quite deep here. We don't want to be caught in here without something to

eat." So we laid in what we thought we needed for two of us for the winter. One of us was to go out and come back in the spring with a pack load of provisions. Castle said he would go to California if we remained, as he had to collect some money there. Clinton and I staid to look out for our claims.

We sold and traded our horses; I traded one of mine for a whip-saw; it was a good thing for us. We felled trees and got out boards. Along the last of October snow fell. I took my rifle and started out to find a deer. I hunted some time before I found one. He was a big buck; it was called a Caribou deer. The next day we brought him into camp, but the dog eat most of the meat, he was so strong. We cooked some of the fat, and it smelled so strong of musk that it could not be eaten. The first of December came a snow storm and it fell about four feet deep. Then a strong wind came up and the snow covered half our cabin. On the rear of the cabin all you could see was the chimney; it kept out the cold pretty good. We made us snow shoes, so as we could get out after wood. After the snow had settled we started our whip-saw, getting out some sluice lumber and preparing, as soon as the snow melted, to work our mines. About the first thing to be done was to shovel the snow from the cabin roof, for it had begun to melt and come through all over. We got it off, but it never stopped for some time, as there was a foot of dirt on it. After that experience we kept the snow off, but coming on spring, as the snow began to melt back of the cabin, a stream of water ran as large as my arm, running through the fire-place. Then we dug a drain right through the middle of our cabin to carry the water off. We had about all we could do to keep our heads above the water. I forgot to mention about the lights we used evenings. I had seen wolves' tracks in the snow not far from the cabin. I put strychnine out one night and killed two; they were fat. I cut off the fat and tried it out, dipped a rag in some of it, and managed to see fairly to do ordinary work. We did not have the daily papers to read, but a pack of cards served to amuse us; so the coyotes and wolves furnished us with our light.

In the spring Castle came back with ten mules and one horse. The mules he had loaded with provisions, so we had enough for the summer. We sent the mules to a valley called Jordan, about twenty miles from the mine. We went and staked off two ranches; then we hired a man to herd our animals; he had several horses and mules belonging to the miners who did not care to look after them. He drove them up at night and would go out with them in the morning; at noon he came in to get his dinner and left the animals feeding.

The Indians found out about this time that it was a good chance to steal some stock, and one day they came while the herder was at dinner and stole the band; eight of them belonged to us. Some of the men followed on after them, but they never overtook them. Then war commenced. If the settlers or miners found an Indian, down he went; and the Indians, if they could catch a man with a good horse or mule and gun, they would kill him if they could; and so many a poor man lost his life. One man that came to Idaho with us lost his life one day as he was cooking dinner, and not thinking there was an Indian around; the first thing we knew they fired upon us, and our man fell, shot through the neck, just under his ear. There were four in the party; one of the others was shot through the leg, but not bad. The Indians then tried to get their mules, but they looked out for that. They got a horse to the man that was shot in the neck, but he was too far gone. He took his revolver and said use it, for it will never do me any more good. The Indians did not kill any more of them; they hit one man three times, but did not kill him. The rest of the party escaped from them.

We worked in the mines all summer, or until the first snow came; then went down to the valley and built us a dug-out. Here I experienced more hardship in four years than in all the eighteen years on the Pacific coast. The valley was a nice one, named after Jordan, afterwards killed by the Indians. It was a good place for grass and hay and near a good market. We bought the first mowing machine that came into the valley. We gave five hundred dollars for it, and cut about two hundred tons

of hay the first season. But the Indians were so bad we could not keep any stock. We would let the stock feed during the day, and shut them up at night; but the Indians would raid some one in the valley, try to burn them out, and then shoot them. We built our house so they could not burn it, and had port-holes, so if they came we could shoot at any point. But we saw it was no use to try and keep the oxen there through the winter; so Castle said one of us had better take them to Oregon, about one hundred and fifty miles. I told him if he wanted to go I would stay on the ranch, and it was the worst winter we ever had. It was not so cold, and the Indians could get around all winter. One night they came to the lower end of the valley and took twenty head of cattle and one horse; then they made a call on me. They did not come to the shanty, but went to the hay-stack and carried off my pitchforks, rope and three oxen that I had traded for in the winter. They drove off most all of the cattle in the lower end of the valley. Uncle Sam sent soldiers out to protect the citizens, and they were about twelve miles from us. The next morning we sent a man over for help, and they sent *two* soldiers. Another man and myself accompanied them. We followed the Indians' tracks to the lava beds; there we had to give them up, for it was so dangerous on account of holes and caves and places where they could hide.

The Indians when they start out to steal go in companies of two to four. The rest stay in camp, and if they get cattle or horses they kill and eat them. There was a man who lived the second ranch from me and he had bought two cows and a calf. He was going away to be gone over night and wanted me to milk the cows and shut them up. I did so. In the morning I went up and found them gone. I looked around some for them, but made up my mind that Mr. Lo had been there in the night and stole them. I went back to the next ranch after a man to go with me. We found their tracks and followed them a little distance. There was a small round bluff not far from his cabin. I said if it is Indians, we'll go on top of that bluff, and if they did steal the cows, you will find they have been on the watch from the top of that bluff. We went up and found where they had

been lying in the sage brush. We went back and got two more men, and we all followed them about five miles until we came to the spot where they had killed them and put some of the meat on the rocks to dry. We thought they were laying for us, so we kept away from the rocks ; but they did not show up. We then built a fire and burned the meat, so they could not have it to eat. Soon after they made a raid in the upper end of the valley at night. There were five men, four of them in one cabin. They had about forty head of cattle and ten horses.

A Mr. Hall owned the ranch and some of the cattle. The other men were stopping there and looking out for their oxen. One night about ten o'clock his dog barked ; they had all gone to bed but Hall ; he went out with his gun ; his horse was tied near the haystack, so he could reach the hay, and he had eaten quite a hole, so large that an Indian crept in there with his gun. The other Indian had hold of his horse. Hall shot at him ; at the same time the other Indian shot at Hall and hit him. He found he was badly hurt and started for his cabin, and before any of them could get out, the Indians surrounded the cabin and set fire to the hay. Then they tried to burn them out. They put fire on the roof, but some of the men managed to put it out ; then they took all of the stock and left. One of the men crawled out and went about twenty miles for a doctor. In the morning one of the men came to me and told me what had happened, and wanted me to go up there and stay, and let some of them go to the government post for help. I took my rifle and on the way I found the dog ; they had shot him with arrows ; he had one in the side of his head, but he would not let me pull it out. A Dutchman lived alone not far from where they stole the cattle. I told him about the dog and where he was, and asked him if he had not better go and try and pull the arrow from his head ; he did so. I went on to the cabin and found out that Hall was badly wounded ; I did not think he would live long. The dog died the next day. Hall desired me to find out the way the Indians took the cattle. It was cold enough nights to freeze the ground, so it was hard to track them. But just at night I found where they had gone over a

high ridge, about a mile from his cabin. When I got back the soldiers had come, and a doctor from the post and another from Silver City. The doctors cut the ball out and stayed all night, and I did as they wanted me to. I showed the captain of the company the direction they had gone. The next morning at daylight they started and overhauled the Indians, and the next day they came up with the cattle. They killed one Indian and got all of the stock but one. It was by accident that they captured them. One of the Indians had a gun that was bright, and the sun happened to strike it just right. It was like the sun shining on a mirror, and that was the way they found them. Hall got better, but the wound did not heal for six months. He went to California to see a doctor; he had the wound probed and he took out a piece of a suspender button that the bullet had cut off and driven into him. The doctor thought that saved his life, for it turned the bullet around his body.

Well, this was the kind of warfare we had for four years. At last the Indians would lay for the miners along the trails and shoot them down; but a company was finally fitted out to hunt them; my partner was among them. They were out ten days before they found the Indians. They killed about forty of them. The Indians did not kill but one white man and wounded one in that fight. The Indians had gathered about twenty bushels of crickets in sacks and dried them to eat. One man had strychnine, and he put some of it in with the crickets. He said if they ever came after them they would not eat very many of them. Any one reading this about such a quantity of crickets would hardly believe it. I have seen the ground covered with them for miles, and they would eat everything in their path, and nothing could stop their course but fire. When they left the grasshoppers came, and they were worse than the crickets, for they could fly. In about two hours they destroyed eighty acres of grain for Mr. Hall. He said to me one day that it's war on every side—war with the white man, with the crickets and grasshoppers, and, worse than all, with the d—d Indians.

In the spring and summer we could kill some game—prairie chickens and sage hens, antelope and a few deer. I built a boat, for in the spring the ducks and geese came into the valley. Two of us would take the boat and go down Jordan Creek—one steer the boat and the other shoot. The current would carry us as fast as necessary. When the snow began to melt the creek would be half a mile wide, and in some places we could kill all the ducks, geese and sand hill crane we cared for. The creek was very crooked. I would tell my partner where he could find us. In the afternoon he would drive down and bring the boats and ducks and us back. One day we thought we would go a little farther; so early one morning we put the boat in the same place and went to the lower end of the valley. Here the hills closed in, and all the water went through a canyon for three miles, with wall rocks on either side, about fifty feet high. The man that was hunting with me wanted to go through this canyon. He said the water was so high there would be no danger of striking the rocks. I told him if he wanted to run the boat all right; but I said if you ever let the boat get cross-way of the stream, we are gone, so you must be on the look-out. We got to the entrance; the water was running like a mill-race, We were the first white men that ever went through there, and I guess the last. He was a good man with the paddle, and I never rode faster in a boat in my life. In one place three or four pails of water came over the bow of the boat, and wet us and the guns, but all we could do was to sit still. When we came out of it into another valley, he said, "I don't think I should like to try that again." "No," I said, "and if the boat had struck a rock, there would not have been enough left of it to float a duck, let alone a man."

A few days after this hunt and race we thought we would hunt antelope for a day or so, and while on a lofty ridge looking for them, we saw at a long distance a dark-looking place; there was no timber, nothing but sage brush for miles, and we wondered what it could be. So the next day we started on our horses to it and found it was a lava bed. I should judge it was about fifteen miles long and about a mile wide. It was full

of holes and caves and some of them a man could walk into and out of sight. As there were rattlesnakes in them, we did not care to enter very far. There were cracks from twenty to thirty feet deep and about two feet wide, and there was not a handful of dirt on the bed. I did not go to the crater in the mountain, but I could see where it started from, and some of it would ring like glass when we touched it. Down at the lower end of the lava bed there was a stream of water boiling out of the ground large enough to run a mill. On looking around we found there was a lake on one side of the lava bed; the water ran under it and came out at the lower end below. The water formed a large marsh, and in the spring the ducks, geese, sand hill cranes and swans came there. One day we started with our horses and blankets and went over there for a few days' hunting. One morning I saw the geese flying over the ridge to the lake. I went up on top of it. The geese were low when they came over the ridge, and in two hours I killed all the geese that two men could carry, and one swan, and the only one I ever killed.

The geese would come so fast I would not stop to put a wad on top of the shot. There was sage brush on the ridge, and it made a good hiding place for me after I had shot at them. I went there again, but they were on to me and not many of them flew over there. When we got back to the valley we sent most of the game to Silver City and got a good price for it. A company of men came near us and went to work cutting timber and getting out lumber for a ferry boat on the Owhyhee river, and after they had it all framed they wanted me and another man to go with them. It was about forty miles and I did not think much of the job, as the Indians were bad all over the country. They had four yoke of oxen on their wagon and a quantity of baled hay on top of the load. I rode my horse and had my rifle with plenty of ammunition. There were six of us and we went along all right until about eight miles of the river.

We camped in a little valley. We eat our supper and everything was quiet, and all at once there came a shot, and we heard the bullet whistle as it passed us. I knew it was not very near,

but one man said "Indians!" He jumped on the wagon and began to throw the bales of hay off, unloaded the timber and piled it up for breastworks. I said to them, "I don't believe they are Indians; if they shot at us they would have been nearer than that." Another man said, "Put out that fire!" There was no water handy, so he poured the contents of the coffee-pot on it and put it out. But there was no more shooting, and after dark I said to the men I would go out and see where that shot came from, but not for any of them to leave camp until I returned. I started with my rifle in the direction the shot came from. I had been there before and I knew the ground pretty well. There was a large bluff of rocks below us, and I thought the shot came from there. I went where the ground was higher and stopped to listen. I sat down near a sage bush, but could hear nothing. At last I saw a light not larger than a candle would make. I could see something pass the light. I went nearer and stopped again. I soon heard one of them talk. I went back to camp and told them they were white men.

I had not been back long before two men came and wanted to know if we had medicine, for one of their men was shot. We had no medicine. I inquired how the shooting happened. They said he set the rifle against a sage bush, and when he went to take it up the trigger caught on the bush and discharged it, and shot him in the right side, near the nipple, and came out at the point of the shoulder blade. We carried over a bale of hay and cut it open for him to lay on. I looked at him; I did not think he could live an hour. The next morning I went to see if he was alive and found he was, and helped get him up and put him on a horse. He had to ride eight miles before he found a house to stop at. In the morning one of the men said to me, "We thought you were Indians and were keeping still." I told him I thought they were Indians and I was out looking for them. I told him I was within gunshot of them last night, and I found they were white men. Some of us supposed they were Indians, for there were no white men through that spring.

The next day we loaded the lumber and started for the river ; arrived there all safe. On our way back we stopped to see if the man was alive that was shot. We found him better and he got well. After we got back the men found they had not lumber enough to finish their ferry boat ; so they sent two men with two yoke of oxen and a wagon to get more. I think the Indians must have seen them when they went down. They pulled up some sage brush and got behind it and waited for them to come back ; and as they came along the Indians fired at them. They shot one man through the thigh and crippled him so he could not get away. They did not hit the other man to hurt him. He started to run ; they ran after him, but he could outrun them. They had a horse hidden away ; they rode it, overtook him and killed him. The wounded man we think was killed by inches.

As they did not return on time, one of the men came to our cabin and said he was afraid the Indians had killed them, and wanted me to go down with him and find out what was the matter. We found them both dead and all cut to pieces and the oxen gone. They had two guns with them, and they were rolled up, we supposed, in the blankets on the wagon. They had taken the scalp off one and cut his heart out and carried it away. The other man was bald, so they did not scalp him ; but he had a long black beard ; they skinned his face all over ; he had letters and photographs of his family. We gathered them, with ten dollars in greenbacks that the Indians did not know was money. We took their bodies to the valley and buried them. We wrote to their friends how the poor fellows met their death.

We received an answer from their fathers, thanking us for our kindness in their great affliction. One of them was named Brown, from Maine, the other named Mott, from Ohio. The one from Ohio was a powerful built man and about twenty-five years old. While we were on our way back with their bodies, I said, "There was one thing I should like to have seen—the three Indians in a pen and the man from Ohio in with them, with nothing but his hands, and I believe he could have killed them all."

Well, the men finally finished their boat, and a company put a line of stages on from California to Boise City, and every little while the Indians would attack the stage. They killed two drivers and I don't know how many men. The government sent troops into the country, but they did not do any good. But when General Crook started, he took them in the winter, and in one fight killed about eighty Piutes and Bannock Indians; that quieted them for a while. But they got on the warpath again, and came into the valley and stole more cattle that parties had brought there. The Indians made a raid one night and got away with several head of cattle. The next day four men started to follow them. They tracked them to the Owhyhee river, and camped there all night on the bluff. The next morning two of them started out to find the Indians or see what direction they had gone, while the other two stayed and prepared breakfast. They waited for the other two to come back, but they did not come, for they stayed on the bluff until most night. Then they knew that something had happened—the Indians had killed them with arrows.

This river, I think, is one of the hardest to cross in the United States for man or beast. There are places for forty miles where nothing can cross. In some places it is nearly a thousand feet to the water and at the same time one could shoot across it, and the Indians new every spot where a man could descend. The two men returned to the valley and said the Indians had killed two of their party and got away with the stock. There was a party of twenty-five started after them, and I went with them. It was in February. We went to the place where the two men descended to the river. We followed their trail and found where they had been hiding among the rocks and bushes. I think the Indians must have been hiding and the two men walked right on to them and they killed them with their arrows before the men had time to shoot. We looked for their bodies, but could not find them, and we concluded the Indians must have thrown them in the river. We followed them for eight days. We captured four horses, but never got a shot at an Indian; they were on the watch for us. It was hard for us, for it snowed about

every day, and we could not have a fire at night to dry our clothing. We broke willow brush and spread it on the snow to keep our blankets from getting wet. This was the last time I went after the Indians; but every little while they would kill some one and steal their stock.

Well, I think I have written enough about that race; but I could relate many more of their depredations while I lived in Jordan Valley; so, after relating one or two more circumstances, I will stop on that subject.

There was one time they got the worst of it. There was a party of miners hunting for them. The second ranch from us there were two men cutting hay. They had a shotgun and a revolver, and they had not been working very long before one of them saw an Indian coming across the valley. One said we had better not let him get to the willow bush on the creek; so they started to head him off. He saw them coming for him; he had his bow and arrow, and put it to his shoulder, trying to make them think it was a gun. He saw he could not make that scheme work, so he came to them and said he was a good Indian. One of them took hold of him and said, "If you are so good come with us." There was a small stone house not far from where they were working. Some of them had lost their stock by the Indians. He went along a short distance all right; the man was holding on to him; all at once he gave a spring to get away, but he hung on to him. The Indian got his knife. He said to his partner, "Shoot him!" He shot, or tried to, but the gun missed fire. The Indian saw that it was his time to escape; he pulled away and started to run. The man with the gun took after him, and you can imagine what kind of a race that was. The Indian was running for life, but the white man was too fast for him. He overtook him and struck him on the head with the gun and broke the stock off just back of the locks, but he dropped him and finished him with the barrels. The other man said, "Do you think we had better scalp him? Yes," he said, "You take it off." He had a knife, but it was not very sharp, but he sawed away on his head, and then stopped and said, "Money would not hire me to do this, but the

terrible acts they have committed in this valley will give me strength to do it. Yes, I will take it off, for you know if the Indians find him and his scalp is not gone, he has gone to his happy hunting ground."

At another time when a man and his wife were riding along in their wagon, an Indian shot her husband and he fell from the wagon. The horses started and she jumped out to see how bad he was shot. The Indians saw they had killed him, and they caught her and took her with them. The soldiers went after the Indians, had a brush with them, and took three prisoners. There was an interpreter at the camp. The Indians said the woman was alive, and they knew where she was. The white men said they would buy her, if they would go with the soldiers to where she was. They took two Indians and started. The Indians kept them going from one place to another and fooling them for about a week. Finally, one of the men took out his revolver and shot one of them, and said to the other, "If you don't go where she is, I will kill you on the spot." He found they meant business. He turned back and went within half a mile of where they killed her husband, and showed where they had killed the woman. On looking around they found some of her hair and bones. They asked who killed her. "Me, big Injun," slapping his hand on his breast. One asked how he killed her. "Laid her head on a rock, took another rock and smashed her head." About that time a bullet went through him, and he was left on the same spot where he had killed her. When the soldiers returned to the fort the officers wanted to know where the two Indians were. They told him that the Indians started to run away and they shot them.

Now I want to say a few words about my pets. I had my faithful dog, a cat with kittens and two antelope. The antelope I caught while quite young and brought them up on a bottle. They were the nicest pets I ever had. They would follow me everywhere. I would shut them every night in a little hut back of our cabin. Before going to bed I would go in to see them. The cat and the kittens would get in between them, and there they would lay altogether. One of the antelopes was taken

sick, and the old cat would bring him game every day, thinking he could eat it. She would push it to his nose and walk around him. But nothing could save him; he died, and in about a month the other was taken sick, and I lost him. I hated to part with them, and my faithful dog lost his life at the same place. A man at the next ranch put out some strychnine to kill coyotes. He came and told me, and said he would take the meat in early in the morning, if nothing took it away. I told him I was afraid the ravens and magpies would drop it and the dog would find it, and I would rather he would kill the best horse I had than to kill my dog. The dog came into the cabin one night; I happened to be out. My partner said he came in and gave one look at him, turned and went out. The next morning I found him dead.

I have as yet said nothing about fishing. The streams were full of trout and like those in Connecticut brooks, and there were salmon weighing from four to sixteen pounds. I have shot them with my rifle and thrown them ashore with a pitchfork. In Jordan creek we found one of the finest fish to the taste I ever eat. They weighed about a pound and had a mouth not larger than a small pea. We caught them with a net. We found them nowhere else.

I said a few pages back I would give the Indians a rest, after relating a few more circumstances; but I know the reader will enjoy a little more about them. One day while in my cabin in California I heard some one chopping, up in a large oak tree, in my little enclosure. I found it was a Digger Indian. I ordered him down. He said, "What's the matter with ye?" I started as if to get my gun, when he came down quickly. But his grit was up, and although not an orator, like Tecumseh, he told me some truths. He said, "White men get em hog run through the woods, eat up all Indian's acorns," and, with a wave of his hand, he said, "This land all belong to me."

While dressing a steer one day a "Digger" and his squaw came up and asked me for the paunch. I told him he could have it if he would carry it off whole. He tried to get it upon his head, but could not, even with his squaw's help. I always felt like

serving Indians bad tricks, and was ready with my knife to slit it and let the contents down his head and body. I told him finally to drag it down the hill and open it.

I venture to say that the Indians who eat the young hornets in comb, and who eat lice, did not clean that tripe as Connecticut butchers do theirs.

My friend Tom Greening told me of an Indian asking him for a frying pan of bacon grease. He said he could have it if he would drink it all. He drank it all at once and departed. The capacity of an Indian's stomach knows no bounds.

But I came as near losing my life by a white man as I ever did by an Indian. The story is this. I had fallen in with an old hunter by the name of Cullum, whom I found was one of the coolest, bravest and best shots in the country. We were near Tulare Lake when he told me that one Taylor was looking for him to shoot him at sight, because he was one of the party that helped arrest Taylor and take him to a lower village for trial, he having cut open the bowels of a boy he had employed to look after his hogs. The boy wanted to leave, and asked for his wages. Taylor said he owed him nothing; whereupon he struck Taylor with a whip. Taylor drew his knife and killed him. One morning I was awakened very early by the tramp of horses, and looking up, I saw two men, well armed, gazing at me. They inquired of me if a man by the name of Cullum was with me. I did not think of what Cullum had told me, and said "Yes; he is in his blankets, I guess." After rubbing my eyes a little, I saw he was not in his blankets. I then looked toward the lake and saw him coming toward our camp with his gun. I said to them, "There he is now." Taylor knew Cullum had a six-shooting rifle, and, of course, thought he had it with him. Taylor did not see Cullum's six-shooting rifle standing by his other rifle, and he concluded that "discretion was the better part of valor," and rode away. Had Cullum been asleep, he would have shot him and then me, as dead men can tell no tales.

After several days' travel down the valley, we came on to a small party of Digger Indians. It was about camping time, so we stopped for the night. They came to our camp and wanted

us to kill an antelope for them, as there was a plenty of them. The Indians had no gun, nothing but their bow and arrow. As one of the Indians was looking around he saw one. He wanted me to go and kill him. My partner took his rifle and started out. The antelope was coming toward our camp. I made the Indians lay down, so that the antelope would not see them. Very soon he shot and they jumped up, but I made them get down again. He shot once more. I said, "Go, now!" They went on the run. They cut all the meat off his bones and brought it to camp, and they eat the most of him up that night.

Now from the valley to the coast range of mountains is worthy of mention. The heat was intolerable through the Foot Hills—even horses dropped dead, and our dogs were so hot and dry they could go no farther. We put them in the wagon, but the wagon was so hot they jumped out. They tried to dig into the ground, but were too weak to do so. The reader may be disposed to doubt the fact, that the hornets and wasps flew into the dogs' mouths to get a little moisture. They snapped at them and were stung in return. Our friend Russell said he would die for want of water. I said we could not stay here; we must go on or die. His tongue was already swollen. We found water after going about five miles from where we left the dogs, and Russell drank until I begged him to stop.

The mules had traveled all day without water; they were wild with delight. My partner went back with two bottles of water and a cup to the dogs. He said that the wasps and hornets were still at them in swarms. The water revived them so they came on where we were, and were soon into the stream, and, like the mules, were delighted.

Russell was sick of hunting before we got up the mountain. He was not built as we were for such a life. One night Russell spread his blankets down after dark, and he happened to get on the trail where the ants went from one tree to another. It was not long before he said something was biting him. He got up to see what it was. His blankets were covered with them. A few days after he felt something else biting him and wanted to know what it was. I told him it was a wood-tick. Then he came

into contact with a rattlesnake, and that settled his hunting, and he said "D—n the rattlesnakes and ticks."

At another time we were camping on the side of a mountain. In the evening we were talking about keeping our guns dry. We had a long stick on the lower side of the fire. Russell set his gun up against a little pine, and said that was a good place to keep a gun from getting damp. It was—for the stick had burnt in two and rolled around against the stock of his gun and burnt it off to within three inches of the lock, but did not discharge it. I picked it up and said, "Here is a good place to keep your gun dry." The reader can imagine the expression on his face, and the language he used would not look well in print. Of course I laughed. He said that it was not much to laugh at—a man a hundred and fifty miles from home without a gun. I told him I could fix it so he could shoot with it. "No," he said, "I am going home." Castle and I stayed about three weeks and killed twenty-two deer. We dried the best of the meat and saved the hides.

After being gone thirteen years on my second trip, I returned to Woodbury, and found that my father, Horace Isbell, had passed away. It was well said of him by the Rev. William Bacon, in a long obituary in the *Waterbury American*: "He was without an enemy except Sly Reynard and his tribe." Mr. Bacon frequently hunted with my father and knew him well. I went back in 1869, sold out my interest in the mines and ranches, and came back to Woodbury in 1870.

And now I am settled within a few miles of my old home, where I expect to anchor when the storm is over.



